

La Vigna

VOLUME III, No. 4

CHRISTMAS ISSUE

December 1986

ECONOMY BAKERY

by Angelica Roberts

Mickey Chianese passed along this photo taken in 1936 of 48 Bayard, at that time the home of Economy Bakery. Angelo Chianese started the bakery during the Depression (thus the name Economy--Nicola Bilancio's idea, according to his daughter Jennie Immordino.)

The building was also home to Angelo and Assunta's family--Leo, Pat, Anthony, Joe, Lena (Angelena), and Sue (Assunta). Tony remembers that the bakery oven could bake up to 500 loaves a day. Week-days there would be two bakings, and on Saturday, three (1500 loaves of bread!)

Anthony said one sack of flour (100 lbs) probably cost \$2 or \$3 and could make 150-175 loaves. Angelo did a brisk business selling the bread for 8 cents a loaf when other bakeries were selling theirs for 10 cents a loaf. When competitors dropped the price to 8 cents, he dropped his to 7 cents. (The price to stores was 5 cents. They in turn would charge 7 cents.)

In an article in the Spring 1985 issue of LaVigna, Leo Chianese recalled that his uncles, Zi'Tonia and Zi'Luigi, helped with the bakery "both monetarily and physically."

Leo and his brothers Pat, Tony and Joe delivered bread, as did Nick Bilancio, his son Lewis, and a man they called Tom Mix.

The building is now owned by Tony and its apartments are home to two of his children, Mickey and Lilia.

However, as Mickey Chianese points out, the name Economy lives on. His uncles Pat and Joe now have an Auto parts business named, of course, Economy Auto Parts.



ROBERTO CASTALDI VISITS CASINDRINESE COLONY IN NEW JERSEY

Roberto Castaldi came from Rome for a one-week visit in early Dec. with Lewis Bilancio, Bernice Smailer and Corinne Bilancio of Glassboro. He is the son of Carmelina D'Angelo Castaldi and the late Francesco Castaldi. Many of us have met 2 of Carmelina's siblings, Mimi and Rosinella, who have visited us here in the States. Carmelina's mother was Angelina Bilancio D'Angelo, sister of Pasquale, Maria, Nicola, Giuseppe, Pietro, Antonetta and Alfonso (Uncle Al).

Roberto's parents moved from the Naples area to Rome where they brought up their three children Claudio, Amalia and Roberto. Roberto works for Alitalia Airlines--he and his wife, Anna, have travelled extensively throughout the world.

A number of Bilancios gathered together for a dinner in Roberto's honor at Rose Bilancio's in Lawrenceville. We put on an impromptu variety show: Francis did magic tricks, Corinne played the piano, Bob Immordino told jokes, Lewis told a story, folks danced to Smoke Gets in Your Eyes, and Roberto graciously allowed us to persuade him to sing a few notes of Ciribiribin.

We're all looking forward to Roberto's speedy return.

FAMILY MAXIMS

I creature nasciono cu panelle
i pane sott'u vraccio.

This translates literally as "Babies are born with bread under their arms." It is a way of saying that babies bring good luck, or, don't worry how you will manage a new baby--you'll always find a way of taking care of it.

THE ILLUSIVE PERSIMMON TREE PART TWO

by Leo Chianese

When I moved to Creamridge in 1970 the first thing I did in 1971 was to buy two persimmon trees (for cross pollination in case they needed it). The Company, Spring Hill Nurseries, promised the first fruit in 3-4 years to be about two inches in diameter. I wrote to them in 1975, complaining no fruit. I received no reply but a growing guide which I already had. One of the trees grew real tall, plenty of flowers, but no fruit. The other, smaller bore fruit the fall of 1979; but the size was the same as the wild trees. (I had obtained a wild tree from the woods near Lakehurst in 1973 which was also bearing small fruits.) I again wrote to the company in 1980 and through 'Action Line' in the Trenton Times obtained a reply that the company was bankrupt! NOW WHAT? So the oriental persimmon tree on Elmer Street was the only good one around. BUT, HERE IS WHERE UNCLE ALPHONSE BILANCIO CAME IN. I called him to show me how to graft scions from the good tree into mine. He came over in April of 1981 and sure enough, the graft took. (Since that time I've tried at least ten grafts into the persimmon trees, all of which did not grow; you got to have the touch). Now, if the winter is severe like the one in 1983-84, the grafted portion dies back to the original tree and new shoots start the next year. I almost got one good fruit on the graft the autumn of 82. The scion flowered in the spring of 1982, but it fell off in the summer. Both the winter of 84-85 and 85-86 were not severe, so this past spring I had flowers and about ten fruits set. As of this writing they had all fallen off but one. The persimmon is huge compared to the others on the same tree, about two and one half inches in diameter as compared to one inch. I am hoping that winters remain mild so that the graft will continue to thrive.

In 1981, my cousin Carmella Luci sold the property on Elmer St. that has the treasured oriental persimmon tree grown by her father Antonio Chianese to a family by the name of Duristanti. They moved in during September when the tree still had its fruit and we got word that they were planning to cut the tree down. Both my Aunt Matilda Bertolone and I went to see them and after many convincing arguments got them to leave the tree stand. We showed Mrs. Duristanti when the persimmons were ripe and my cousin Marion Mazzatelli gave her a recipe for persimmon bread and cake. So far we can still boast that Uncle Antonio Chianese's tree from a California seed is the only good tree standing in the Trenton area if not all of New Jersey north through Maine.

9/30/86



STAFF THIS ISSUE

Corinne Bilancio
Lew Bilancio
Clothilda&Dean Acquaviva
Fran Bilancio
Angelica Roberts
Angelo Chianese
Mickey Chianese
Lucy Gervasio
Lorraine Anthony
Leo Chianese
Jennie & Bob Immordino

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



- Jan. 1 Mary Gervasio
9 Phyllis Gervasio
23 Beatrice Johnson
24 Joseph Chianese
27 Ralph Gervasio
30 Debbie Armenti
31 Celeste Armenti
- Feb. 2 Steven Armenti
3 Frank Garzio
7 Bob Chianese (Joe's son)
12 Sandra Remboske
13 Marie Armenti
Angela Chianese Josephson
16 Lewis Bilancio
18 Vince Guerra
24 Dorothy Bilancio
- Mar. 6 Angela Gervasio
7 Loren Armenti
Steven & Laura Garzio
14 Leo Bilancio
24 Anthony Chianese
Louise Chianese
25 Ralph Gervasio
26 Carolyn MacLeod
Richard Brett Cohen
28 Pam Chianese
29 Angelo Chianese

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



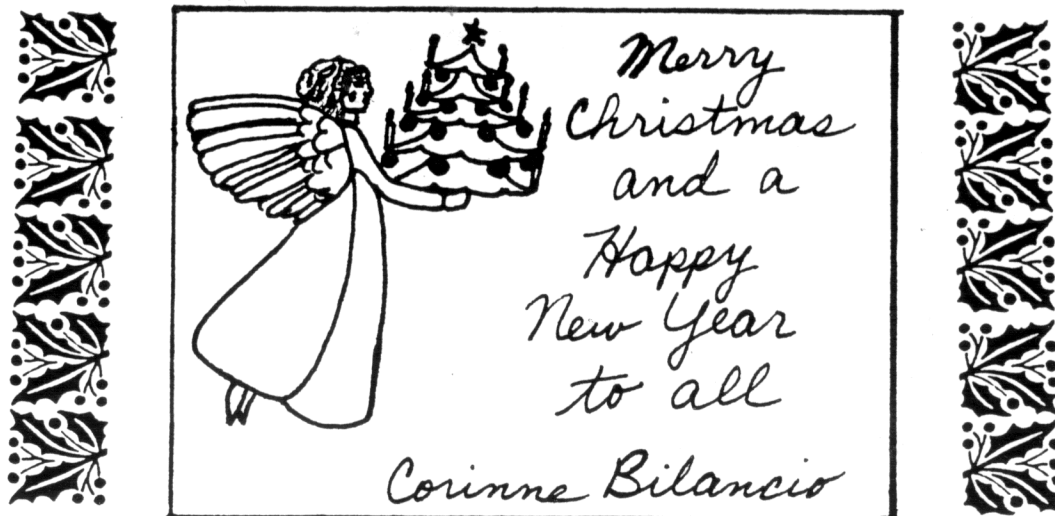
- Jan. 15 Jerry & Rita Chianese
- Mar. 8 Nick & Marie Armenti
8 Roberta and Dan Garcia
10 Pat & Jane Chianese
16 Jennie and Bob Immordino
30 Carolyn & Jim MacLeod

VIBRANT LIFE PUBLISHED

An invaluable documentation of the history of Trenton's Italian Americans by family friend Erasmo Ciccolella was recently published; VIBRANT LIFE 1886-1942: TRENTON'S ITALIAN AMERICANS contains oral history, and painstakingly researched records of the education, churches, work and activities of Italians in Trenton--"...their rich, vibrant social lives." Included are memories shared by Alphonse Bilancio and by Rose Bilancio.

Applicaton for the publication fund of VIBRANT LIFE 1886-1942 was made by the Central Jersey Chapter of the American Italian Historical Association. Grants were received from the New Jersey Historical Commission and from the National Italian American Foundation. Mr. Ciccolella acknowledges Robert Immordino as one of his "wise and patient counselors".

LaVigna will be happy to forward inquiries about Erasmo Ciccolella's book to him.



Dear Friend,

I hope the past year has been as pleasant and healthful for each of you as it has been for me. Fortunately for all of us, we have the joy and comfort of our families -- those nearby and at a distance -- to lend a grace and meaning which all too often the events of the world around us deny.

At the beginning of the year Bernice and I drove to Atlanta for a visit with brother Leo and family; continued on to Florida for two cruises; then returned to Atlanta for another enjoyable week of activities with Leo, Dorothy, their daughter Jane and her husband Dave.

Summer approaching, we arranged our one-month vacation at Ship Bottom, made all the more enjoyable with visits from family and friends. We just got home in time for the annual family picnic. Rain tried to dampen our spirits, but only succeeded in bringing us closer together under the pavillion roof. Then off to the World Congress of Travel Agents in Singapore. What a beautiful, clean, ultra-modern city! Even the skyscrapers are artisitic achievements. A week in Thailand gave us an appreciation of these gentle people and their fantastic temples

and palaces.

We stopped in the San Francisco area on our way over and return to see Roberta's (Immordino) and Dan Garcia's new son, Robert Michael. We were the first to photograph him (at 2 days, while still in the hospital).

Spent almost a week with Bernice's relatives. We do spend some time at home in Glassboro.-- 12 fig trees take a lot of care, but produce a wonderful crop which is shared by many. Also the travel business experience is put to use making arrangements for family and former clients, and organizing groups such as the one we accompanied to the Vancouver EXPO fair last fall.

Then there is our annual trip to Margarita. Two years ago there were four of us; last year seven. To start this new year 16 friends will accompany us in escaping two weeks of winter on a tropical island off the coast of Venezuela.

So, a year has sped by, and once again we make use of the Grapevine to wish each of you a joyous holiday season, that the new year will be bright and beautiful, and that the love and peace within your hearts and within our extended family will keep us close regardless of rain, of distance, and of time.

Lew Bilancio
Glassboro, N. J.

Leo and Dorothy Bilancio of Atlanta, Georgia are shown here with their daughter Jane and her husband Dave Darpinian at the time of their August visit to Trenton. They were among those who had travelled farthest to be with the family at the time of the La Vigna picnic.



La Cucina

ASSUNTA CHIANESE'S SUSAMIELE A Honey Cookie

This version of what Angelo Chianese describes as "alphabet honey hardtacks" comes from his effort to preserve a recipe of his grandmother Assunta's. Angelo's Aunt Sue still bakes Susamiele as she learned from her mother without a written recipe. Angelo (and daughter Julianne) spent an enjoyable baking session with Suzie in 1984, when Angelo recorded this recipe.

1/2 lbs HONEY - warm to thin ,
 13 oz OIL (optional 2 oz butter) - add to honey
 2 1/2 lb FLOUR - put on board, make well in center
 1/2 LEMON RIND, grated - add to flour
 (optional) - 2 tsp CINNAMON (*do not use lemon rind if using cinnamon)
 - add to flour
 OR 1 TB ANISONE (*strong anisette flavoring) - add to
 liquid
 3 TB BAKING POWDER - put into flour well

Add liquid to flour and work dough til flour is consumed. (Dough will shine.) Roll into 5/8" rolls. Cut and shape into letters. (Assunta's favorite letters were SOAUT.) Place letters on cookie sheet and pat down to 3/8". Bake at least 20 minutes until the edges are dark at the top. You may have to move sheets to top rack of oven to cook top of susamiele. They should be tan. After cooling, cookies can be stored in a tin to keep them hard.



Deadline for the spring '87 issue of La Vigna is February 14, Valentine's Day.

Send your articles, photos, drawings, cartoon ideas, recipes and family maxims to:

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